

APPROVED MINUTES

(Approved May 14, 2001)

MONTGOMERY COUNTY REDISTRICTING COMMISSION, 2001

MONDAY, APRIL 16, 2001 AT 4:00 PM

8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Shirley Small-Rougeau, Chair
Andrew Morton, Vice Chair
Bill Sher
Jason Tai
Steve Berry
Jayne Plank
William Roberts
Harry Lerch
David Davidson

STAFF

Ed Lattner, Assistant County Attorney
Pamela Zorich, Planner, Park & Planning
Ralph Wilson, Council Staff
Robin Ford, Council Staff
Walter Robinson, Park & Planning GIS

GUESTS

Dale Tibbitts, Citizen PAC
Peggy Erickson, Dacek Office
Joy Nurmi, Praisner Office

OPENING REMARKS

Acting Chair Rougeau called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM, and suggested that the Commissioners introduce themselves for the benefit of any guests at the meeting. After Commission introductions, guest Dale Tibbitts with the group Citizen PAC introduced himself to the Commission and Staff.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

After informing Staff of final, minor revisions, the Commission unanimously voted to approve the February 15, 2001 and March 19, 2001 meeting minutes.

PUBLIC OUTREACH UPDATE

Staff distributed and reviewed the press release and web posting containing Redistricting Commission information, stating that additional information, such as meeting dates, can be posted on the internet site as requested. (Redistricting information can be found on the internet at www.co.mo.md.us/council/.)

Ms. Ford also explained that the list of community organizations mailed to the Commission would serve as the mailing list for those who will receive Commission information. People who sign-up as guests at Redistricting Commission meetings will

also be included on this mailing list. Commissioner Plank suggested that municipalities are included on that list, and offered her personal copy of the Directory of Maryland Municipal Officials, 2000 for Staff reference. Staff asked Commissioners to suggest any other groups or individuals that should be added to the Commission's mailing list.

2000 CENSUS DATA DISCUSSION

Ms. Zorich from Park & Planning reviewed her memorandum dated April 9, 2001 that was sent to all Commissioners via e-mail and U.S. Mail. Specifically, she re-stated that the official 2000 County population is 873,341. This is an overall increase of 15.4% (116,320 people) since 1990. Based on population numbers only, five Council districts each containing 174,668 people would produce equally populated districts. The population distribution among current Council districts is below:

District 1	166,689
District 2	192,764
District 3	179,075
District 4	167,556
<u>District 5</u>	<u>167,257</u>
 TOTAL	 873,341

Ms. Rougeau inquired about the possibility of errors in the data relating to inaccurate figures for Takoma Park that was reported in the media. Ms. Zorich stated that there is an official census program that will begin in the summer to address concerns regarding possible undercounts, but at this point, this data is the official census release. The data available in the first release includes precincts, race, adult and total population. Ms. Zorich distributed maps to Commissioners and guests displaying the following information:

- 1981 and 1991 Council districts.
- Several maps displaying County Racial Data

The maps distributed will be posted on the M-NCPPC website in the near future. Ms. Zorich requested that Commissioners inform her of any additional maps that would assist in preparing the final plan.

Ms. Zorich also reminded the Commission that the Redistricting Plan submitted by the 1991 Commission was modified by the Council and is not what the Council finally approved. The Council shifted two precincts from the 1991 Redistricting Commission's proposed plan.

The Commission discussed the Census data release, and inquired about the correct way to interpret the data maps. Specifically questions were raised regarding the racial

data, because residents were able to select more than one race for this Census. Ms. Zorich noted that the highest percentage of Blacks in any one County precinct is 58%, highest percentage Asian is 42%, and highest percentage Hispanic is 53%.

ARCVIEW GIS REDISTRICTING SOFTWARE

Walter Robinson, from Park and Planning's Research and Technology GIS staff, conducted a brief introduction and demonstration of the ArcView GIS Redistricting Software. He distributed a manual on the program to all Commissioners. In summary, Mr. Robinson highlighted the tools and features of the Redistricting Software and demonstrated how it can simplify creating various redistricting plans. The Software incorporates Montgomery County census population data, and allows users to create districts based on the target population number of 174,668. One of the major benefits of the program is that it allows users to incorporate various themes, or levels of data, into the creation of redistricting plans. Population race, municipalities, major roads, 1991 approved districts, precincts, and the homes of current Council members are all data sets that can be used to determine Council districts.

Mr. Robinson stated that once users were familiar with the basic tools of the software, actually creating draft plans was not that difficult or time consuming. In fact, this software makes it possible for users to prepare several draft plans in a short period of time, and provides the supporting information (maps, statistics tables, formatted reports and bar graphs) that clearly portray the underlying data of each draft plan.

Park and Planning Staff also discussed the process for saving and submitting draft plans to the full Commission. Ms. Zorich encouraged all Commissioners to save all plans, either on disk or in a folder created at the workstation. Up to two plans can fit on one floppy disk, and the plans can be distributed by e-mail. Park and Planning staff will formally name the plans and place them in some standardized format for Commission consideration. Park and Planning Staff will also prepare maps to facilitate discussion of the various plans.

When submitting plans to Park and Planning Staff, Commissioners should include a list of the precincts by district. If possible, the list should be in Excel format, but other computer formats or typed precinct lists will be accepted. Commissioners must submit any plans (created with the software or by another means) at least one week prior to the next meeting, to enable Park & Planning Staff ample time to format and prepare plans for the meeting.

BASE MAPS & OVERLAYS

Although the software may be a more convenient way to view Census data and create plans, Park & Planning Staff has also produced a set of map overlays displaying data that the Commission requested at its last meeting. Ms. Zorich provided each Commissioner with a base map of County precincts, and several, transparent overlays

that can be used with the base map. This information is consistent with the information contained in the GIS software program. The overlay maps distributed are:

- Municipalities and Parks
- 1991 Council District Boundaries
- General Assembly Boundaries
- 2000 Population Density (dot map)
- Total Population by Precinct
- Planning Areas

Ms. Zorich agreed to provide additional layers if the Commission requested them. Mr. Dale Tibbitts pointed out that the Census has a 'place level' data layer that is the Bureau's best approximation of where certain communities and areas are located. He stated that this might be helpful to the Commission. When asked about data for registered voters, Ms. Zorich stated that that information is not currently included in the GIS software program, but could be added upon the Commission's request. Mrs. Rougeau distributed County March, 2001 voter registration data, obtained from the Board of Elections web site, and **requested that Park & Planning Staff create a bar graph displaying the number of registered voters for each Council district.** Mrs. Rougeau pointed out that all Commissioners can access the BOE's site for updated voter registration information.

COMMISSION WORK PROGRAM AND SCHEDULE

Regarding rescheduling the presentation by Marie Garber, Chair of the 1991 Redistricting Commission, Mr. Wilson indicated that Staff would contact her, and if possible, schedule her for the May 14th Meeting.

The Commission discussed the draft meeting schedule and made revisions to the schedule distributed at the April 16th meeting. **The May 14th and June 4th meetings were rescheduled from 4:00 PM to 7:30 PM.**

The Commission again considered locations for holding future meetings, including the County Regional Service Centers. Commissioner Roberts stated that it might be more appropriate to hold the Commission worksessions at the Rockville location, which is central to the entire County, and has the meeting space and technology that the Commission will require. He indicated that once plans are conceived, the Commission should receive feedback from County residents, by holding meetings in various areas of the County, and by conducting a public hearing.

The following motion by Commissioner Roberts was approved (8-1):

For the time being, the Commission should schedule all meetings for the Rockville location. If the Commission produces draft plans that are ready for public comment significantly earlier than

the scheduled public hearing date, then it will be appropriate to hold Redistricting Commission meetings at locations around the County.

Regarding the time for Redistricting meetings, Commissioner Morton expressed support for holding meetings either early in the morning or later in the evening. **The Commission concluded that the May 14th and June 4th meetings will be held at 7:30 PM, in Rockville. Mrs. Rougeau stated that the time for the meetings after June 4th will be set at the May 14th meeting, and requested that Commissioners review individual schedules and be prepared to select time for the next scheduled Redistricting Commission meeting at the next meeting.**

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

Maptitude

Mrs. Rougeau mentioned that the State is using Maptitude software for the legislative redistricting process, and stated that Commissioners can follow that process via the internet, to remain aware of any decisions that may impact County redistricting.

Special Invitation to Council Members

Commissioner Roberts noted that during his tenure on the Montgomery County Charter Review Commission, the group invited Council members to come and express their priorities for amendments to the Charter. Mr. Roberts indicated that this was especially useful in that it avoided the Commission proposing Charter Amendments that were not supported by the Council. He suggested that the Redistricting Commission consider inviting Council members to a Commission meeting to allow them to express any concerns or issues that they would like to Commission to consider.

Mr. Wilson commented that there is value to the Commission in working independently and then, as outlined in the Charter, the Council will have an opportunity to point out any concerns and revise the plan. Vice Chair Morton also pointed out that since there are Commissioners who represent each Council district, Commissioners can speak individually with the Council members from their districts and bring any issues or concerns of the Councilmember back to full the Redistricting Commission. Mr. Tai agreed that a more informal approach, such as speaking individually to the Council members is a better approach, because the general idea for creating independent, citizen commissions is to remove the politics from the work of any particular Commission, and to minimize the influence of the legislators until the final product is officially released.

The Commission agreed that a letter offering an open invitation would be sent to all Councilmembers, the County Executive, the Chief Executives of all municipalities, and umbrella community organizations to attend Redistricting Commission Meetings. Mrs. Rougeau indicated that she would draft the letter and that Staff will send it to the recipients. The letter will also include the address for the

Commission's website, and mention that the Commission accepts draft plans submitted by non-Commissioners.

Public Information

Mr. Tibbitts asked for information on the procedure for non-Commissioners to submit draft redistricting plans for possible consideration by the Redistricting Commission. Mrs. Rougeau responded that any plans can be sent to Commission Staff and Staff bring them before the Commission. Mr. Tibbitts also inquired about receiving all of the materials that are distributed to the Commissioners. Specifically, he asked about having access to the data from Park and Planning that was discussed at this meeting. Mrs. Rougeau responded that it is the Commission's policy to inform anyone who has signed up on the Commission mailing list of the location and topics of upcoming meetings. Ms. Ford stated that the cover memo prepared by Pamela Zorich was intended for the Commissioners, but that the data was 2000 Census data that will soon be posted on the Park and Planning website. **The Commission also directed Staff to send the meeting packets prepared for Commissioners to all that request them.**

MEETING SCHEDULE

The next meeting will be held on May 14th, in the COB 5th Floor Front Conference Room, at 7:30 PM.

The meeting adjourned at 6:27 PM.